

John Boehner  
Chairman  
8th District, Ohio

*House Meets at 9:00 a.m. for Legislative Business*

*Anticipated Floor Action:*

**H.R. 1385—Employment, Training, and Literacy Enhancement Act**



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**Floor Situation:** The House will consider H.R. 1385 as its only order of business today. Yesterday, the Rules Committee granted an open rule providing one hour of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Education and Workforce Committee. The rule waives House rules which prohibit appropriations in a legislative bill. It makes in order a committee amendment in the nature of a substitute as base text and provides for consideration of a manager's amendment (#1) by Mr. McKeon, debatable for 10 minutes, which may not be amended or subjected to a division of the question. The rule grants priority in recognition to members who had their amendments pre-printed in the *Congressional Record*. Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

**Summary:** H.R. 1385 consolidates over 60 job training, education, and dislocated worker programs and authorizes such sums as necessary for three block grants for adult and child training and adult literacy. The bill also (1) authorizes such sums as necessary for the Job Corps; (2) amends the Wagner-Peyser Act to expand coordination of national public employment offices; (3) requires states to develop benchmarks and goals to evaluate the performance of the block grants; (4) provides incentive grants to states that have proven success in increasing literacy and reducing unemployment; (5) sanctions states who fail to meet their state literacy and employment goals; and (6) reauthorizes several programs under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and repeals others. CBO estimates that enactment of H.R. 1385 will not have a net effect on the federal budget. However, because authorizations for services to Native Americans, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation have expired or will expire, CBO estimates that enactment will result in additional discretionary outlays of \$1.8 billion over the next five years, assuming Congress appropriates the estimated amount

authorized. The bill was introduced by Mr. McKeon and Mr. Souder and was ordered reported by the Education & Workforce Committee by voice vote.

**Views (on the overall bill):**

**Republican Leadership:** Supports

**Chairman Goodling:** Supports

**Clinton Administration:** Supports

**Amendments:** At press time, the *Legislative Digest* was aware of the following amendments to H.R. 1385:

***Manager's Amendment***

**Mr. McKeon** may offer an *en bloc* amendment (#1), debatable for 10 minutes, to:

- \* ensure that members of each state planning team represent all regions of the state;
- \* increase membership flexibility for local workforce development boards;
- \* authorize local elected officials to develop local partnership plans with workforce development boards;
- \* require that minutes of all formal development meetings be available to the public;
- \* clarify a state's role in developing accountability standards;
- \* expedite the process to enforce performance accountability standards;
- \* provide states with increased flexibility to initiate reforms;
- \* provide a grandfather clause for states with comprehensive employment programs already in place which allows for a three-year transition to the new programs;
- \* maintain current law requirements that states must pass 70 percent of allocated funds to local agencies;
- \* clarify that summer youth programs are an essential part of disadvantaged youth programs;
- \* require the Labor or Education Secretary to sign off on the comprehensive state performance plans;
- \* ensure that any region with a population of 500,000 or more is designated as a workforce development area;
- \* require states to describe how they will use adult education funds;
- \* limit the items considered when awarding adult education grants to local providers;
- \* require the National Institute for Literacy to focus on literacy needs of individuals with disabilities, and
- \* make various technical and conforming amendments.

**Staff Contact:** *D'Arcy Philips, x5-6558*

***Other Amendments***

**Mr. Graham** may offer an amendment to (1) ensure that home-schooling parents are not compelled to have their children participate in block grant programs; (2) emphasizes the importance of using phonics to promote literacy; (3) clarify that local workforce development boards do not have the authority to mandate school curriculum; and (4) define literacy as the ability to read with fluency and comprehension. The member argues that the amendment will strengthen literacy programs and

protect local schools and parents who school their children at home from intrusive government. Opponents of the amendment argue that the bill does not address school programs and that the protections are not necessary. **Staff Contact: Gregory McGinity, x5-5301**

**Mr. McKeon** may offer an amendment (#3) to make certain modifications to the vocational rehabilitation program, including (1) allowing vocational rehabilitation programs to promote self-employment or business ownership, (2) requiring federal agencies to establish procedures to comply with electronic and information technology guidelines; (3) providing clients with greater choice and responsibility in selecting the type of services they utilize; (4) promoting efforts to recruit and train vocational rehabilitation professionals, including individuals with disabilities and minorities; (5) requiring vocational rehabilitation clients to play a key role in developing an individualized plan for employment; and (6) increasing community and business involvement with independent living programs. **Staff Contact: Todd Jones, x5-6558**

**Mr. Owens** may offer an amendment (#4) to reauthorize such sums as necessary for summer youth employment training programs. The bill currently consolidates these programs into the disadvantaged youth block grant. The member argues that summer youth programs are very valuable and that consolidating them into block grants will jeopardize their funding. Opponents to the amendment argue that although the programs are important, states should be given the discretion to allocate federal grants to best meet their needs. **Staff Contact: Kenya Reid or Paul Ganzaes, x5-6231**

**Mr. Owens** may offer an amendment (#6) to require states to coordinate and document their efforts to encourage qualified individuals with disabilities and minorities to pursue careers as vocational rehabilitation professionals. This provision, which is required by current law, is eliminated by the bill. **Staff Contact: Kenya Reid or Paul Ganzaes, x5-6231**

**Mr. Owens** may offer an amendment (#7) to authorize services to teach vocational rehabilitation clients how to use public transportation. The member believes that helping clients adapt to public transportation will speed their return to work and cut costs of special transportation systems. The bill does not address this issue. **Staff Contact: Kenya Reid or Paul Ganzaes, x5-6231**

**Mr. Souder** may offer an amendment (#8) to clarify that “competitive employment” under the vocational rehabilitation act is defined as jobs which are available to any one in the labor market and that the individual selects. The member argues that in order for vocational rehabilitation services to be successful, individuals must be able to compete in the area of their choice. **Contact: x5-4436**

**Additional Information:** See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVI, #13, Pt. IV, May 15, 1997.



PLEASE NOTE: UNDER AN OPEN RULE, MEMBERS MAY OFFER ENTIRELY NEW AMENDMENTS TO A BILL AT ANY TIME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN PRE-PRINTED IN THE *CONGRESSIONAL RECORD*.